

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Cabinets By Carter Inc

Minnesota Technology Inc.

Cabinets By Carter Grows Sales, Employment

Client Profile:

Cabinets by Carter manufactures high-end, custom made wooden cabinets. Established in 1992 in a garage in Alexandria, Minnesota, the company has grown to 20 employees working in a 7,500 square foot facility.

Situation:

Cabinets by Carter was founded in response to customer demand. Though founder Carter Schmidt's original cabinet business failed, loyal customers still clamored for his high-quality products. When Mr. Schmidt started Cabinets by Carter, he wanted to avoid the situations experienced in his first venture to ensure safe, effective growth for the new company. He frequently enlisted the services of Minnesota Technology, Inc. (MTI), a NIST MEP network affiliate, to work with him during the process of growing his business.

Solution:

MTI has provided assistance and support to improve Cabinets by Carter's automation, marketing development, sales training, financial planning, software and hardware selection, and growth strategies. As the company succeeded and began to grow, MTI helped design an efficient plant layout to ensure a proper flow of product. MTI also provided information technology and employee training.

Utilizing the services of MBA students at Minnesota State University-Moorhead, MTI and Cabinets by Carter conducted a diagnostic assessment to research, develop, and map the company's growth strategies. In cooperation with the West Central Initiative fund, MTI hosted a multi-company Fundamentals of Marketing training program and then met one-on-one with each company--including Cabinets by Carter--to help refine and execute its marketing plan.

MTI helped the company update its computer network and select an IT service provider. In addition, MTI helped Cabinets by Carter automate its sales quoting function, streamlining the process and eliminating a bottleneck in the production cycle. Most recently, MTI guided the company through the selection and installation of an accounting system tied to the quoting system.

As desired, Cabinets by Carter has experienced steady growth, and today operates with no debt and very little overhead. The company employs 20 people and is recognized as a high-end designer and manufacturer of custom wood kitchen cabinets for regional residential markets.

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Results:

Created 19 jobs.

Established a thriving business in response to customer demand.

Doubled sales every year since the second year of operations.

Doubled available workspace by moving into an efficiently laid out plant.

Updated IT systems to keep pace with growth.

Testimonial:

"Without a doubt, if I hadn't had Minnesota Technology, Inc. to lean on, I don't think I'd be in business today. They have really helped me run a business the way a business should be run."

Carter Schmidt, Manager